



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW SUES
MARVIN CARL CROWDER, JR., INDIVIDUALLY AND d/b/a
CARL CROWDER'S OUTLET AUCTION FOR AUCTION FRAUD**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw filed suit today in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County on behalf of consumers nationwide against Marvin Carl Crowder, Jr., individually, and against his auction located at 1100 Georges Drive, Charleston, West Virginia. In September of 2000, the Attorney General's office began receiving complaints regarding Marvin Carl Crowder Jr.'s failure to provide items he sold to consumers on the Internet auction eBay.

Upon placing the winning bids for items on eBay, consumers received an e-mail from eBay with instructions from Mr. Crowder. His message advised consumers to mail a check or money order to him in Charleston, West Virginia. Unsuspecting eBay buyers sent checks and money orders to him at the address he provided. Mr. Crowder then cashed the checks and money orders but did not provide the merchandise to consumers. When the eBay buyers realized that their payments had been received but their goods had not arrived, many complained by mail, e-mail, and/or attempted to call Mr. Crowder. He did not respond to their inquiries nor did he refund their money.

Mr. Crowder also shipped goods to eBay buyers which were broken, missing parts, and used or reconditioned when they were advertised as new. Mr. Crowder did not refund money to consumers in these situations either.

After working with an eBay investigator, the Consumer Protection Division learned that eBay users lodged 21 complaints against one of Mr. Crowder's accounts in a 35-day period. The Attorney General's office also learned that at least 34 accounts which can be tied to Mr. Crowder were suspended by eBay for unfair trading practices.

The lawsuit also alleges that Crowder violated the law in the sales he made at the live auction in Charleston, West Virginia. The Attorney General's office received complaints about Mr. Crowder's failure to provide promised refunds there, and it seeks restitution for those consumers as well.

In addition to refunds for consumers, the lawsuit also seeks injunctive relief and civil penalties. The Attorney General aims to halt Mr. Crowder's business in West Virginia and bar him from using eBay. Additionally, the suit asks for civil penalties of \$5,000 for each violation of the West Virginia Consumer Credit and Protection Act.

If you have any questions about this matter or want to report a problem with Marvin Carl Crowder, Jr.'s auction or one of his eBay accounts, please call Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Hotline at **1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986**.

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